democratic State. The European Parliament in its Urgency Resolution Procedures adopted on 11th February 1999, a non-binding Resolution on religious freedom. While expressing anxiety about the increase in persecution of religious minorities in various countries, the Resolution also applauds PM's speech to the nation supporting freedom of religion and makes a call about bringing to justice the murderers of the Australian citizen and his two sons. The Australian Foreign Minister issued a statement conveying their Government's concern and sorrow.

Government of India has emphasised India's strong and continuing commitment to the maintenance of our long established tradition of religious tolerance and secularism. The statements of the President and Prime Minister of India condemning the recent incidents, as well as the widespread public condemnation of these events have also been brought to the attention of interlocutors in countries where concern has been expressed. In has further been emphasised that government is fully committed to safeguarding the right of all citizens to freedom of religion, and that this is enshrined in the Constitution. Government's prompt action to fully investigate and proceed under the law against all such acts of violence, and to preserve India's long tradition of peaceful co-existence and social harmony between people of different religious faiths has also been made known.

मध्य प्रदेश के लिए सूखा-राहत

49. **श्री बालकवि बैरागी** : क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या मध्य प्रदेश का एक-तिहाई से अधिक भू-भाग सूखे से ग्रस्त हैं और राज्य के 26 से भी अधिक जिलों को राज्य सरकार द्वारा सूखा-ग्रस्त घोषित किया गया हैं:

(ख) इस संबंध में राज्य सरकार द्वारा सरकार से कितनी राशि की राहत/सहायता मांगी जा रही हैं; और

(ग) केंद्र सरकार ने 1998-99 और 1999-2000 के वर्षो के लिए कितनी राशि की राहत/सहायता स्वीकृत करने का आश्वासन दिया हैं?

कृषि मंत्रालय में राज्य (श्री सोमपाल) : (क) से (ग) मध्य प्रदेश सरकार ने एक ज्ञापन भेजा हैं जिसमें सूखे के कारण राष्ट्रीय आपदा राहत कोष (एन एफ सी आर) से 251.34 करोड़ रूपये की सहायता मांगी गई है। राज्य सरकार द्वारा बताया गया हैं कि राज्य के 7 जिलों में 33 तहसीलें सूखे से प्रभावित हुई है। राज्य सरकार द्वारा भेजे गए ज्ञापन पर राष्ट्रीय आपदा राहत कोष से सहायता के लिए स्थापित प्रक्रिया के अनुसार कार्यवाही की जा रही हैं। तथापि, आपदा राहत कोष के तहत 1998-99 के लिए राज्य सरकार को 56.65 करोड़ रूपये (42.49 करोड़ रूपये के केन्द्रीय अंश सहित) का आबंटन किया गया हैं और सम्पूर्ण केन्द्रीय हिस्से की निर्मुक्ति उन्हें पहले ही कर दी गई है।

Eighth Round of Indo-Us Talks

0. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in the eighth round of Indo-US talks, recently, concluded in New Delhi;

(b) what kind of headway has been achieved in making new broad-based relationship between the two countries;

(c) the reasons that Government have failed to take into confidence the major political parties about the nature of talks exchanged;

(d) whether these talks had harmonised positions on CTBT; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The recently held talks with the United States in New Delhi from 29—31 January, 1999 were in continuation of the dialogue initiated in June 1999. The talks are being conducted on the basis of comprehensive proposals that India put forward on disarmament and non-